



H1N1 Partner and School Briefing

Date: January 6, 2010
To: All Rhode Islanders
From: Director of Health, David R. Gifford, MD, MPH
Re: Information on H1N1 and school-based vaccination clinics in Rhode Island

Local Influenza Activity Level: Local¹, H1N1 predominant circulating strain

Rhode Island²: 360 hospitalized cases, 9 deaths

Sentinel Surveillance (% of visits due to influenza-like illness)³: Rhode Island: 0.98%, New England Region: 1.1%, Nation: 2.79%

School-based clinics for second doses of H1N1 vaccine

The Rhode Island Department of Health (HEALTH) released the schedule this week for school-based clinics for second doses of H1N1 flu vaccine. Beginning on January 11, this second round of clinics will span approximately four weeks. To view the clinics schedule, see: <http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/about/schoolh1n1clinics/index.php>.

Children who were younger than 10 years of age at the time of their schools' first H1N1 flu vaccination clinics will be vaccinated at upcoming clinics. Students who received their first doses from pediatricians can get their second doses at school clinics. Additionally, children who are younger than 10 years of age and who did not receive their first doses of H1N1 flu vaccine can receive their initial doses at school clinics. **School leaders who have specific concerns about their schools and their scheduled dates should contact their State H1N1 School Clinic Coordinators as soon as possible.** School leaders can find the contact information for these coordinators in the document attached to this message.

For answers to frequently asked questions about second doses of H1N1 flu vaccine, see: <http://www.health.ri.gov/news/H1N1Advisories/FAQsAboutSchoolClinicsForSecondDosesOfH1N1Vaccine.pdf>.

School-based H1N1 vaccination clinic best practices

Sound planning and good clinic management helped all of HEALTH's evening, school-based H1N1 flu vaccination clinics run smoothly this fall. School leaders who are preparing clinics for second doses of H1N1 flu vaccine should keep these reminders and best practices in mind.

- **Bring additional consent forms to your clinic for your students who did not attend your first clinic.** These forms can be found at <http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/about/schoolh1n1clinics/index.php>. Students who were vaccinated at your first clinic do not need new consent forms.
- **Collect any new consent forms as soon as possible.** This will minimize the number of clinic walk-ins.
- **Encourage your students who meet the age requirement for second clinics and who were not vaccinated at your first clinic to arrive at your second clinic as early as possible.** Clinic staffers may have to process these students' consent forms.

¹ Rhode Island reported local activity for the week of December 27 to January 2, 2010. One region reports elevated influenza-like illness. For details see <http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/about/surveillance/>.

² Confirmed and probable hospitalizations and deaths since September 1, 2009

³ Influenza-like illness activity reported by 19 sentinel surveillance sites from December 20 to December 26, 2009

- **Communicate to parents plans to stagger vaccinations (e.g. “Children with last names beginning with the letters A through G will be vaccinated between 4 and 5:30 p.m.”).**
- Arrange for adequate security in your clinic’s registration area, vaccine administration area and outside of your school. Security outside of your school will help address traffic-flow issues.
- Establish a separate area to vaccinate hysterical or disruptive children.
- Shield children who are awaiting vaccination from children who are receiving their shots.
- Provide an activity for children to keep them calm and occupied during their 15-minute observation periods.
- Arrange tables, chairs and wastebaskets in the vaccine administration area before Rhode Island Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) members arrive.
- Use stickers or stamps to identify students who are registered for their vaccinations to distinguish them from siblings or other children who do not attend your school.
- Have ample school staff to register students. This will ensure an orderly registration process. In addition, familiar faces are comforts to both parents and students.
- Provide clear signage outside and inside of your school that will direct parents to specific areas.
- Be prepared with enrollment rosters at your registration tables.
- Keep school staffers who answer parents’ phone calls updated about clinic plans and policies.
- Be prepared with water for volunteers.
- Set aside one or more staff members without specific assignments. They can troubleshoot.

Public clinics for H1N1 flu vaccine

HEALTH will release a schedule this week for free, public clinics for H1N1 flu vaccine. Beginning on January 16, 2010, approximately 28 single-date clinics will run at locations throughout Rhode Island over a four-week period. The schedule will include daytime and evening clinics and weekday and weekend clinics. Vaccine will only be available to those who are 18 years of age and older. Individuals will not have to present identification at the clinics and can attend any clinic, regardless of where they live.

Flu Vaccine Locator

Individuals who are 18 years of age and older can now find H1N1 flu vaccine at pharmacies and other public venues using HEALTH’s **Flu Vaccine Locator**. The Flu Vaccine Locator can be found on HEALTH’s website (www.health.ri.gov). Individuals who enter their zip codes into the Flu Vaccine Locator will receive a list of nearby pharmacies with H1N1 flu vaccine and a map indicating their locations. Please note that not all participating pharmacies that will carry H1N1 flu vaccine have registered yet in this new system. As H1N1 vaccine providers continue to register and as HEALTH updates the system to include public H1N1 flu vaccination clinics, it will direct Rhode Islanders to the nearest public locations with H1N1 vaccine.

Flu Vaccine Locator registration

Independent pharmacies and other centers that are interested in registering in HEALTH’s online Flu Vaccine Locator should see: www.health.ri.gov/flu/about/newclinicregistration/. Those who want to update the information that they provided in the registration process should write to john.cucco@health.ri.gov. HEALTH already contacted representatives from the mass immunizers in Rhode Island and the regional managers of the chain pharmacies with branches in the state about registering in the Flu Vaccine Locator.

National webcast on school-based clinics features Tom Lawrence of the Rhode Island MRC

Flu.gov hosted a webcast today, January 6, 2010, on the national impact of school-based vaccination clinics and the importance of vaccination. The webcast featured special guest Tom Lawrence, NREMT-P, Head of the Rhode Island Medical Reserve Corps. Flu.gov’s series of Know What to Do About the Flu webcasts are archived and available for viewing at <http://www.flu.gov/news/knowwhattodo.html>.

H1N1 flu vaccine clinics for healthcare workers and first responders

Rhode Island’s Healthcare Service Regions (HSRs) announced the times and locations of their H1N1 flu vaccine point-of-dispensing (POD) clinics last week. Healthcare workers and first responders throughout the

state can receive H1N1 flu vaccine at their HSR's POD clinic on January 9, 2010. For more information, see: <http://www.health.ri.gov/news/H1N1Advisories/HSRFluVaccinationClinics.pdf>.

Some HSRs' lead hospitals have established H1N1 Information Lines. Healthcare workers and first responders seeking more information about the H1N1 vaccination strategy in their HSRs can find these Information Lines at <http://www.health.ri.gov/facilities/hospitals/about/serviceregions/index.php>.

Resources

- HEALTH at <http://www.health.ri.gov>;
- Archived partner briefings and regular news updates: <http://www.health.ri.gov/news/flu/>
- H1N1 Information Line (M-F 8:30am- 4:30pm) 401-222-8022
- H1N1 email address h1n1@health.ri.gov
- <http://www.flu.gov>